

October 16, 2002

Marlene H. Dortch
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
445 12th Street SW, TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

Re: CG Docket # 02-311- Biennial Review 2002

I am a consumer who is deaf and a professional advocate for people with disabilities.

I m writing you on my own behalf.

I strongly oppose any repeal or revisions that weaken these regulations related to hearing aid compatibility, Telecommunication Relay Services, access to Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems, digital cell phone TTY compatibility, and Section 255. Because of these regulations, I now enjoy access to telecommunications. We cannot rely on the marketplace alone to provide such access without regulations from the FCC.

We need for all new forms of technology to be accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. If we do not ensure this now, many people who are deaf will continue to experience lack of access because of communication barriers. This would be tragic since in reality technology is helping to bring down communication barriers all around us --- TTY Relay services, Video relay services, Video interpreting services, email pagers should be just the start to a more accessible future for people who are deaf.

I would also like to see fast speed connection cost brought down for people who are deaf so that they may communication in their language -- American Sign Language which is a visual language, via video conferencing high speed connections. For this population fast speed connections should cost the same as regular voice lines cost for hearing people.

In closing, the FCC should leave the disability related telecommunications/technology regulations fully intact unless they are strengthened. They are needed to protect our rights to access the telecommunications network.

Sincerely,

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